

MISSION Act: Community Care Proposed Access Standards

(assuming no changes in VA capacity or productivity)

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Office of Community Care

Current Access in VA Facilities:

In December 2018, VHA completed more than 4,334,000 appointments. Average wait times for new patients were:

- 21.6 days for primary care
- 11.2 days for mental health care
 - **NOTE:** This is an average for all mental health services. Some specialties, such as psychiatry, have significantly longer wait times
- 23.2 days for specialty care

If the proposed access standards are implemented, the number of sites that will qualify for care outside the VA today are:

- Primary care – 69 of 141 sites currently have wait times longer than 20 days
- Mental health – 2 of 142 sites have wait times longer than 20 days
- Specialty care/cardiology – 22 of 139 sites have wait times longer than 28 days
- Specialty care/gastroenterology (GI End and gastroenterology combined) – 81 of 128 sites have wait times longer than 28 days
 - **NOTE:** This data is not reliable in that workload is being captured outside of these clinics. We are actively working to improve data collection

Current Utilization of Veterans Choice Program for 40 Mile Eligible Population:

Total Veterans eligible for Choice based on distance (40 miles from the closest VA medical facility with a full time primary care physician): **664,954**

- Veterans had at least one Choice appointment: **240,641 (36%)**
- Veterans who only used Choice: **4,052 (less than 1%)**

Urgent Care Benefit under MISSION Act

Under the MISSION Act, eligible Veterans can receive urgent care without prior authorization at community providers who participate in the VA community care network. This will allow those Veterans with non-emergency immediate care needs to get care closer to home.

	Access Standard: Travel Time or Distance		Access Standard: Wait-Time		Percent of Enrollees Eligible Under Standard (drive time only)
	Primary Care/ Mental Health	Specialty Care	Primary Care/ Mental Health	Specialty Care	
Avg VA Wait Time			21.6/11.2	23.2	
Avg Nati Wait Time*			24.1 – 32 days for new patients		
VA Choice	40 miles from full time PCP	40 miles from full time PCP	30 days	30 days	8%
Proposed MISSION Access Model	30 minutes	60 minutes	20 days	28 days	20% for PC 31% for SC

Footnotes

*Wait time excludes appointments within 48 hours

**2017 Survey of Physician Appointment Wait Times, Merritt-Hawkins study

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